

**RECORD OF A MEETING OF THE  
AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY STAFF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE HELD ON  
14 FEBRUARY 2008 VIA TELECONFERENCE**

**Present:**

Mr John Cameron (Chair)	Professor Gabrielle McMullen
Dr John Barclay	Ms Anne Szadura
Mr Peter May	Dr Tony Stokes
Mr David Keegan	Professor Gail Crossley
Mr Chris Sheargold	Ms Glenis Davey
Associate Professor Marea Nicholson	Ms Robin Fisher
Mr Geoff Woodward	

**In Attendance:**

Ms Pauline Croxon (Executive officer)  
Ms Sybilla Wells (Note taker)

**Apologies:**

Mr Jeremy Gauder  
Professor Marie Emmitt  
Professor Sandy Middleton

---

The meeting commenced at 3:00pm. The Chair, Mr John Cameron welcomed members of the ACUSCC to the first meeting of 2008, took attendance and asked that the apologies be noted.

**1. MATTERS ARISING:**

**1.1 NOTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Chair, informed the committee that Sister Marie Kehoe's name was misspelled in the record of meeting notes for the 6 December 2007 meeting and asked that the notes be adjusted. The Chair, called for any comments regarding the notes of the previous ACUSCC meeting.

The committee accepted the record of meeting notes from the previous meeting.

## **1.2 ACTION ITEMS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

In relation to the first action item the Chair stated that this will be considered when the Change Management Policy is considered during the consultation process.

The second action item that all committee members be informed of the ACUSCC meeting dates for 2008 had been actioned through an email sent to all members of the ACUSCC on 11 February 2008.

## **2. STANDING ITEMS**

The Chair invited Dr John Barclay to address the committee in relation to the resignation of the University's Indigenous Employment Coordinator Ms Antonia Graham.

Dr Barclay informed the committee that he was disappointed at Ms Graham's departure but she had made a personal decision to move interstate. Toni contributed a lot to ACU in the area of indigenous employment. She brought calmness and systematic development to the implementation of the indigenous employment strategy.

Dr Barclay informed the committee that recruitment of a new Indigenous Employment Coordinator may be difficult due to a high level of competition in the area may increase as a result of yesterday's apology from the government to the stolen generations. Previously the position of Indigenous Employment Coordinator was to be based in Melbourne but due to a lack of appropriate applicants the position had to be advertised nationally and the best candidate was based in Queensland. The position will be advertised nationally and could be based on any campus.

### **2.1 OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING REPORT**

The committee received this report.

### **2.2 EQUITY AND STAFF DIVERSITY REPORT**

The committee received this report.

### **2.3 INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT REPORT**

The committee received this report.

### **2.4 GENERAL STAFF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

The committee received this report.

The Chair asked if the committee had any matters to raise regarding the standing items. No matters were raised and the reports were accepted by the committee.

## **3. UPDATE RE HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND RELATED POLICIES**

### **3.1 POLICIES FOR CONSIDERATION**

**(a) INTERIM POLICY - PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOR ACADEMIC STAFF**

The Chair asked Professor Gabrielle McMullen to discuss the Interim policy - Professional Learning for Academic Staff. Professor McMullen informed the committee that as Chair of the Teaching and Learning Evaluation Committee, the feedback received from the focus group on teaching and learning was to re-orientate the policy from development to professional learning, which is why the name of the policy has been changed from “Development Program for Academic Staff” to “Professional Learning for Academic Staff”.

Professor McMullen stated that one substantial change was the removal of Section 5.3 Indigenous Academic Staff Development from the policy. Section 5.3 was added to the policy some years ago and is now fully implemented.

Associate Professor Nicholson stated that there was support for the notion of “Professional Learning” as a more contemporary title than “Staff Development”. There was no objection to the removal of a specific reference to indigenous staff development on the basis that other relevant programs are being implemented. In relation to Section 6 Associate Professor Nicholson commented that previously there would have been a member from the Union on this focus group and asked if there is an option to include a Union member.

The Chair responded that the University could take this issue on board. Dr Barclay stated that consultation procedures are mandated in the Enterprise Agreement and focus groups do not have to have member of the union. There was discussion about the election of staff representatives including how Union representatives often become committee members in that way. Professor McMullen said that she was happy to consider having a staff representative on the focus group.

Ms Davey advised that the Unions will be seeking to restore Union Representatives on committees due to the repeal of HEWRRs. Dr Barclay responded that the Enterprise Agreement requires staff representatives to be elected and he was not sure if HEWRRs had actually been repealed. This political process will take some time and it is probable that it will not be final until the relevant legislation has been gazetted.

The Chair asked for any further comments. There were no further comments. The Chair indicated that the University would give further consideration to issues raised in the discussion.

**(b) POLICY ON EVALUATION OF TEACHING AND LEARNING.**

Professor McMullen informed the committee of changes to the Policy on the Evaluation of Teaching and Learning. One is the change from DEST to DEWR. The policy was considered by the Teaching and Learning Evaluation Committee which recommended the changes to the policy.

There was a query in relation to Section 4, second last dot point, to clarify the intent. Professor McMullen informed the committee that they had added the requirement for staff members to provide evaluation data to there Head of School and other senior offices (consistent with the higher education sector practices).

Associate Professor Nicholson asked what was hoped to be gained from these changes. Professor McMullen advised that many staff members already provide evaluation data to their supervisors and that this data is required for applications for probation and promotion. Some staff are not teaching at the standard expected these changes allow Heads of School to find ways to support staff to enhance their teaching by providing professional learning opportunities.

The quality of teaching is an important issue and it is hard to have a discussion with staff regarding their performance if there is no data. This is a change in focus from individuals managing their own performance to the University being responsible for managing staff performance.

Ms Davey was concerned that the policy had changed to focus on performance management and was not supportive to staff. She stated the policy was not designed to be a performance management tool but a team based learning tool. She felt that it might take away self management and staff empowerment.

Professor McMullen responded that as chair of various committees when looking at staff member's evaluations when they provide their own data, we are often impressed. Cohorts of staff are providing this data for probation and promotion purposes. Dr Stokes responded that the intent of the policy is to help staff but some are afraid that the evaluation will be unfair but if staff are not willing to improve their performance that will affect the quality of teaching.

Professor McMullen reminder the committee that a lot of staff already submit this data voluntarily as a part of staff development. Associate Professor Nicholson responded that the new requirement may not work. There may be staff members who need to work on their teaching; some staff may need to have another resource available to them for example due to supervisor problems, student issues and the popularity of the course. She did not think the changes to the policy were mission appropriate.

Following discussion it was recommended that the policy should commence with the next window, i.e. Semester Two, 2008.

Ms Davey was concerned that some Heads of School would use the policy as a performance management tool not a developmental tool. She requested a 12 Months trial for staff to bring it to the table themselves. Also training will be needed for Heads of School.

Dr Barclay stated that this change to the policy is positive and will assist the University, students and individual staff members as for the vast majority of staff it will be positive. Ms Davey responded that the philosophy of the original policy was reflective, and the policy does not say it is for staff development.

Dr Stokes stated that there could be a conflict if staff members do not have a good relationship with their Head of School, could the staff member take data to an alternative supervisor or mentor to be reviewed?

The Chair stated that there had been a fair hearing of the different views and asked if there were any other comments. No further issues were raised and the University will give full consideration to the feedback and issues raised in the discussions.

#### **4. OTHER ITEMS OF BUSINESS:**

The Chair informed the committee that there were a number of policies that had been consulted on that will now go forward for final determination.

In relation to the document titled: *Summary of feedback received for policy documents* (Agenda item 7.2) the Chair informed the committee that it was his intent for those policies that the university had agreed to change to be changed and then Determined by the Vice-Chancellor. In cases where the University has declined to make the changes suggested these policies will also go to the Vice-Chancellor for final Determination. In the cases where further advice is needed the feedback has been distributed to other areas for advice. The Chair invited the committee to provide comment on Agenda item 7.2.

Mr Geoff Woodward commented that he had put forward feedback on the Salary Packaging policy. He did not think it was necessary to seek financial advice regarding the purchase of a laptop computer. Dr Barclay responded that the requirement to seek financial advice when salary packaging was introduced due to a concern that people may over extend themselves. This has not occurred and PREOD is happy to consider this as long as the University is not liable. Mr Woodward thought that staff should only be required to seek advice if salary packaging a motor vehicle.

Mr Woodward asked what amount of GST had been collected on behalf of the University in the past year. Dr Barclay responded that the amount was less than half of a position and helped cover the costs associated with salary packaging. Dr Barclay also stated that some staff must pay FBT and others are exempt and do not have to pay anything for the Salary Packaging service. A shift to collecting 1.25% on the value of everything in a package to cover costs might be more equitable.

Mr David Keegan stated that associate leases and novated leases are more complex for staff in NSW because staff could no longer get the rebate from the M7 if their vehicle is classified as a company car.

All of the proposed salary packaging adjustments will however need to be tested legally to see if they are viable.

Ms Glenis Davey asked if the suggested changes to the Management of Staff Unattached from Position Policy were intended to get rid of people. Dr Barclay explained that changes only applied if staff had exhausted their unattached status and no position existed in cases where staff have been on extended periods of leave.

Dr Stokes raised another item of business issue regarding the unexpected growth in student numbers this year which has resulted in staff exceeding workloads, and timetabling and campus operations having problems catering to the volume of students. The Chair responded that he was aware of this and it will be looked into.

Associate Professor Nicholson wanted to bring the committee’s attention to the challenges being faced attracting staff to ACU. She stated that ACU pay rates are lower than other universities and this will get significantly worse as the next pay rise is not until September this year. She requested consideration of the possibility of an adjustment before the scheduled rise? The Chair responded that he would take this on board and discuss the issue with the Vice-Chancellor.

**5. NEXT MEETING:**

The next meeting date of the Committee was confirmed for 20 March 2008 commencing at 3:00 pm.

The meeting concluded at 4:25 pm.

**6. ACTION ITEMS**

Actions	Completed
The University to consider feedback regarding the Interim policy - Professional Learning for Academic Staff and the Policy on Evaluation of Teaching and Learning.	